3.0 Responses to Comments on the Scope of the Kirkland Nickel Project

3.1 Responses to Written Comments

3.1.1 Commenter 1: Hae-Sun Asher

Response to Comment 1-1

Fish passage through the Forbes Creek culvert under I-405 is problematic. There are also blockages to fish passage downstream from I-405. WSDOT is studying the need to install a second culvert to improve fish passage. WSDOT remains strongly committed to a watershed approach in addressing water resource and fisheries issues along the I-405 corridor. The I-405 team is working with City of Kirkland staff , Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) representatives, and the Early Environmental Investments (EEI) program to develop a plan for improving the overall ecological functioning of Forbes Creek as a watershed, increasing the number of both resident and migratory fish, and improving existing water quality.

Substantial improvements to water quality leaving the roadway are anticipated. Water quality treatment will be provided for all new pavements, and will be retrofit to existing pavement through extensive use of ecology embankments and ecology ditches.

One of the key questions at this time is where to make fish passage improvements. Several fish blockages still exist downstream which are precluding salmon access to good salmon spawning gravels in the ravine just downstream of I-405. These blockages may be more appropriate candidates for fish passage improvements than the I-405 crossing. Preliminary investigations indicate that, in the area upstream of I-405, the stream system appears better suited for protection of water quality and rearing of resident trout than for salmon spawning.

Discussions with the City of Kirkland, WDFW, and the EEI program will continue to refine the watershed proposal and identify how the I-405 improvements and mitigation projects can be coordinated with local actions to help enhance watershed functions in Forbes Creek and assist Kirkland in providing long-term protection to the stream system.

3.1.2 Commenter 2: Dwight Baker

Response to Comment 2-1

Reconfiguring the NE 116th Street interchange, along with widening NE 116th Street and adding a turn lane on 120th Avenue NE, will remove a choke point. WSDOT intends to remove other choke points in the future as part of the Implementation Plan. I-405 and NE 85th Street (SR 908) fall under the jurisdiction of WSDOT. The other crossings of I-405 in Kirkland are part of the local roadway grid, and are under the City of Kirkland jurisdiction. Any additional crossings of I-405 by the local street grid would be initiated by the City. Additional interchanges may be initiated by either WSDOT or the City, but would be designed and constructed by WSDOT, because they are on a state facility. Acceleration, deceleration, weaving, ramp storage, and other geometric considerations dictate the minimum spacing between interchanges on divided highways, so this is a limiting factor in the addition of new interchanges.

Traffic analysis and projections are being performed as part of the development of the I-405 Implementation Plan and corridor vision. WSDOT is running traffic models on the

corridor system, including local access roads within proximity to I-405. The selected elements of the Implementation Plan will adequately handle traffic volumes projected through 2030.

Response to Comment 2-2

The potential water quality and quantity impacts will be assessed and described in the environmental documentation prepared for the Kirkland Nickel Project. The environmental documentation will also discuss the proposed drainage system and treatment facilities that will be used to detain and treat stormwater runoff from the highway.

Response to Comment 2-3

Improvements in the Kirkland Nickel Project area should improve existing air quality. This is due to the reduction of existing congestion on the roadway. The I-405 Project Team is currently analyzing the overall effects on air quality due to the improvements. WSDOT does not have jurisdiction over requiring stricter air quality emission standards.

Response to Comment 2-4

The I-405 Project Team is taking a thorough engineering approach to the development of stormwater runoff treatment concepts for this project. Runoff treatment concepts have changed substantially since I-405 was first constructed. Design criteria now require that at least 91 percent of all runoff (includes 100 percent of the first flush runoff) from the new pavement be collected and treated, wherein 98 percent of the targeted pollutants are removed. The runoff treatment design will be built in phases to match the I-405 Master Plan, wherein the entire I-405 corridor will be retrofitted to these requirements by the time the I-405 Master Plan is completed.

WSDOT will install a series of filtration and detention areas long the corridor to achieve water quality standards for runoff. Filtration, to remove the sediments and pollutants, will be achieved by diverting flows through specially constructed beds of mulch and sand built into the freeway side slopes and ditch bottoms (known as “ecology embankments” or “ecology ditches”). Additional treatment is done through the use of settling ponds and structural basins that trap the sediments and oils. These basins also detain the runoff and release it at a slower rate to match the natural conditions. This helps to restore groundwater flows, minimize downstream flooding, and protect against erosion. The treatment facilities are carefully sited so that they will fit within the available right-of-way as much as possible.

Along with the onsite treatment designs, the design team is looking at other opportunities to improve the existing streams. Although outside the existing highway corridor, opportunities to improve watershed conditions and functions are being researched through coordination with local cities, and county and state agencies. Typical watershed improvements would be to improve fish passage and habitat, stabilize stream beds or erosion prone areas, and improve or develop wetlands. The project goal is to leave the local environment in a better condition after completion of this project.

Response to Comment 2-5

Please see the response to Comment 2-1. NE 132nd Street will be converted to a half-diamond interchange in the I-405 Implementation Plan. A northbound on-ramp and a southbound off-ramp will be constructed to make the other half of a split interchange with NE 116th Street. Other changes suggested in this comment may be included in Implementation Plan improvements.

The I-405 team is working with King County Metro, the City of Kirkland, and Sound Transit to make the 128th direct-access project compatible with the Kirkland Nickel Project design.

Response to Comment 2-6

WSDOT plans to reconstruct the NE 70th Street and NE 85th Street interchanges as part of the larger I-405 Implementation Plan. Funding for Nickel Projects is limited, and therefore the previously mentioned interchanges will not be reconfigured as part of the Kirkland Nickel Project's scope. Some minor modifications will be required where the ramps tie into the I-405 main line to accommodate the newly striped lanes.

Response to Comment 2-7

See the response to Comment 2-6. The Implementation Plan will construct an additional northbound lane north of NE 124th Street. The NE 124th interchange will be reconstructed as part of the ultimate plan on I-405, which may include reconfiguration of NE 124th Street and the entire interchange. The NE 116th Street interchange is a design element from the Implementation Plan brought forward into the Nickel Project because of the enormous traffic benefits it provides at an affordable cost within the Nickel funding package. Compared to the rest of the Nickel Project, it is designed ahead of its time – the design meets 2030 traffic volumes.

The northbound limits of the Kirkland Nickel Project were determined with a focus on traffic and funding. A large volume of traffic exits northbound I-405 at NE 124th Street, so this was a logical location to drop the additional lane, considering the limits set forth in the Nickel funding.

The Nickel Project will also reconstruct NE 116th Street from I-405 to 1,700 feet to the west, and the NE 116th Street/120th Ave NE intersection. These improvements are intended to alleviate the bottleneck on NE 116th Street, provide better southbound I-405 access, and improve the eastbound through movement on NE 116th Street, which will make this a better east-west crossing opportunity.

3.1.3 Commenter 3: Kenneth Berta

Response to Comment 3-1

Different types of noise walls will be considered during the evaluation of noise mitigation measures.

Response to Comment 3-2

The noise analysis will measure existing noise levels at several locations within the project limits to characterize the existing noise environment. A detailed noise model will be constructed to evaluate future noise levels, including traffic associated with additional lanes. The noise modeling will extend approximately 500 feet from I-405; this distance will be increased if levels at 500 feet approach the FHWA/WSDOT noise abatement criteria.

In any areas where future traffic noise levels are predicted to approach or exceed the criteria at noise sensitive receptors, such as houses, schools, or parks, abatement will be analyzed. This analysis will include additional abatement in any areas with existing noise berms or barriers where future noise levels are still predicted to be above the criteria. The line of sight between I-405 and nearby properties will be considered. The analysis will include feasibility and reasonableness criteria as defined by WSDOT and

approved by FHWA, and will incorporate sound absorptive materials in areas where barrier reflections may be of concern.

3.1.4 Commenter 4: Betty R. Brown

Response to Comment 4-1

The traffic analysis will include evaluating the weaving condition at NE 160th northbound onto I-405. Improvements in this area are expected to be part of the Implementation Plan. While the Kirkland Nickel Project does not include any specific actions on northbound I-405 beyond NE 124th Street, there could be some minor improvements identified that could help with safety at that location. The proposed ramp at NE 132nd Avenue would be evaluated as part of the next phase of work on I-405 and is not part of the Kirkland Nickel Project.

3.1.5 Commenter 5: Mayor Mary Alyce Burleigh

Response to Comment 5-1

The 2001 Kirkland Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) designates NE 116th Street as a Priority Two-Bicycle Corridor in the *Priority Corridor Network for Bicycle Planning*, Figure 4-2.

To the west of I-405, NE 116th Street is designated as a Priority One Pedestrian Corridor in the *Priority Corridor Network for Pedestrian Planning*, Figure 4-1. This designation ends at the BNSF railway crossing – several hundred feet west of I-405. To the east of the BNSF crossing, and through the I-405 interchange, NE 116th Street has no designation as a pedestrian corridor.

At the Agency Scoping Meeting and Public Open House, the NE 116th Street interchange was shown as having a bicycle lane on each side of the street, and sidewalk only on the north side under I-405. Following comments from the City of Kirkland at the Scoping Meeting, we have added sidewalk on the south side of 116th through the interchange.

Response to Comment 5-2

A new road extending north from NE 116th Street aligning with the NB off-ramp at 116th would not work with a half Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) configuration. Furthermore, FHWA and WSDOT Limited Access standards would not allow a newly constructed intersection within 300 feet of the off-ramp termini. The road could still be constructed farther to the east.

Response to Comment 5-3

The traffic analysis will conduct a detailed operational study of the NE 116th Street interchange with I-405 and the effects on NE 116th Street approaching I-405. We are using the CorSim micro-simulation modeling package to look at all of the NE 116th Street intersections as a system.

Response to Comment 5-4

The I-405 project design team is in the process of preliminary right-of-way analysis and mapping. Appropriate information will be distributed to permitting and environmental agencies, including the City of Kirkland, as soon as it is complete enough for distribution.

Response to Comment 5-5

The environmental documentation will carefully consider how views will be affected and will offer appropriate mitigation. A discipline report is being prepared that addresses visual impacts, including how structures will affect aesthetics (see comment S-11 for Environmental Procedures Manual [EPM] reference). The Kirkland Nickel Project will include mitigation measures to break up walls/berms and create a pleasant visual setting. Such mitigation may include enhancing the architectural design of project features such as retaining walls and noise walls, including stepping and battering walls to reduce apparent height, using a consistent design vocabulary throughout the corridor, using lighter weight materials for spans to produce reduced structural silhouettes, applying texture to concrete surfaces to reduce apparent scale, and applying concrete sealants for uniform color and to limit graffiti damage.

Response to Comment 5-6

The project will reconstruct this interchange, to include installation of improvements to the storm drain system. This system's new pipes and inlets will provide the conveyance necessary to avoid flooding of the underlying roadway.

Response to Comment 5-7

Please see the response to Comment 1-1

Response to Comment 5-8

The Kirkland Nickel Environmental document will analyze and provide mitigation for all permanent and temporary impacts associated with construction of the Kirkland Nickel Project.

WSDOT will maintain constant communication with the contractor to ensure adherence to the Kirkland Nickel Project Traffic Control Plan. This plan will detail the procedures set in place for managing traffic during construction. Every effort will be made to maintain as practicable the level of bus access that currently exists.

WSDOT also intends to keep in constant communication with all of the jurisdictions that would be directly affected by the project's construction. Coordination efforts will be used to allow the jurisdictions as much time as possible to prepare for the construction phase of this project.

Response to Comment 5-9

The air quality analysis will rely largely on the existing I-405 corridor analysis completed for the corridor EIS. One area not addressed in the corridor-level EIS was localized transportation pollutant concentrations at freeway ramp intersections. Carbon monoxide concentrations will be modeled at the highest volume and most congested intersections

and at the right-of-way line adjacent to I-405. Also, measures to reduce air pollution during construction will be further refined from the discussion in the corridor EIS. Regional air quality issues and trends were addressed in the corridor EIS, which will be referenced regarding those areas.

Response to Comment 5-10

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 5-11

Please see the response to Comment 5-5.

Response to Comment 5-12

Comment noted. The I-405 Project Team will provide a number of opportunities for agencies and the public to offer input to this project. WSDOT remains committed to carrying out a public involvement plan that fulfills those requirements associated with an EIS; regardless of the level of environmental documentation ultimately selected for the Kirkland Nickel Project. In addition to scoping, cooperating agencies will have an opportunity to review and comment on individual discipline reports prior to preparation of the NEPA environmental document for the project. There will also be an opportunity for comment on the environmental document.

Response to Comment 5-13

The Kirkland Nickel Project and the I-405 Implementation and Master Plans all work with the proposed 128th Direct Access Project – the direct-access structure and ramps will not require modification for any of the construction phases.

Response to Comment 5-14

We have reviewed the narrow lanes extensively and have made significant improvements, where possible, to our design. We are proposing the replacement of three noise walls from the shoulder toward the right-of-way line, where we can set the walls in the Implementation Plan location without purchasing right-of-way. This has minimized the length of narrowed lanes and shoulders. We have also maximized the width of all shoulders, where feasible (up to the 10-foot standard) to provide as much emergency refuge area as possible.

Response to Comment 5-15

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is currently developing new and improved approaches and tools to manage mitigation commitments developed as part of the Kirkland Nickel Project. One tool is a Manual of Mitigation Measures Implementation (MOMMI) that will become part of the contractual documents to which the design-build contractor must adhere. Another tool is a comprehensive database that is being developed to track each mitigation measure and project commitment. WSDOT will maintain and use these tools throughout the life of the project to assign specific responsibility for compliance, to audit implementation, and to monitor performance during and following construction. The design-build contractor will be responsible for securing any added approvals and permits prior to advancing any design refinements that are outside the envelope of coverage provided by the Kirkland Nickel environmental document and permits secured by WSDOT.

Response to Comment 5-16

The comments from that meeting pertaining to environmental review (listed below) have been given to the appropriate environmental discipline report preparers for evaluation.

1. Will existing noise walls be moved? (Total 6 input with 3 high priority)
2. Environmental justice
3. Environmental impacts
    - Noise
    - Air
    - Water
4. Onsite environmental mitigation
5. Concern about the crossing of Forbes Creek, and minimizing impacts for phase I work vs. long-term work
6. Stormwater mitigation
7. Businesses along I-405 are faced with many view blockages including trees. My concern is what can be done to help these views for commercial areas of the city without negatively affecting residents who could possibly want these buffers. (High)
8. Wetlands effects post/during construction
9. Retrofit culvert (Forbes Creek) to facilitate fish passage.

Response to Comment 5-17

Please see response to Comment 5-4.

3.1.6 Commenter 6: Michael Coward

Response to Comment 6-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 6-2

Please see the responses to Comment 2-2 and 2-4 for an overall description of efforts to treat and control highway runoff along the corridor. In particular, stormwater runoff that now flows directly from the highway into Juanita Creek will be first filtered by running it through "ecology embankments and ditches." Flow control will be provided by a separate detention pond. Together, future discharge from the highway will be much cleaner and will more closely reflect historical conditions.

Response to Comment 6-3

Woodland has been identified during preliminary research for the Wildlife and Upland Vegetation Discipline Report. We are currently conducting studies to identify environmental elements, including wildlife and wildlife habitat, and to identify any impacts on these elements that could occur from the Kirkland Nickel Project. An effort will be made to minimize and avoid any impacts.

Response to Comment 6-4

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration, Sound Transit, and King County Department of Transportation recently partnered to conduct an extensive process of public and agency involvement to identify ways to improve mobility and transportation in the I-405 corridor. This process devoted nearly four years to identify travel patterns and transportation needs, develop alternative solutions, study their effects, seek public and agency comment, and choose the best alternative. The results of this process are documented in the *I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation* (EIS) issued in June 2002, and the *I-405 Corridor Program Record of Decision* (ROD) dated October 2002. Copies of both of these documents are available on the I-405 Project web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/I-405/.

Through the EIS and public involvement process, WSDOT and its partners examined a wide range of alternatives to improve I-405 and transit facilities throughout the 30-mile-long I-405 corridor. Alternatives included a new high-capacity transit system such as light rail operating in its own right-of-way, a bus rapid transit (BRT) system operating in improved high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-405 with connections to Issaquah and Redmond, addition of new transit facilities such as transit stations and park-and-rides, and expansion of local bus transit service. Other solutions included a new expressway, added HOV and general-purpose lanes on I-405, expansion of local arterial streets, improvements to non-motorized transportation facilities, and transportation demand management strategies such as regional tolling of the freeway system or value pricing during periods of peak congestion.

The Selected Alternative that was crafted and chosen through the EIS process is described in detail in the ROD. It includes expanding capacity on the existing I-405 facility by adding up to two additional lanes in each direction, along with the BRT system and a range of other transit facilities and service improvements that will connect with the regional system as you suggest. WSDOT, its partners, and the local jurisdictions will implement the Selected Alternative in stages as part of the long-range Master Plan for

the I-405 corridor. The Kirkland Nickel Project is among the first of these staged projects.

The current Kirkland Nickel Project environmental process is the next step in refining and evaluating the transportation improvements that were chosen during the EIS as the Selected Alternative within the Kirkland section. The Kirkland Nickel Project environmental process focuses specifically on how this initial stage to expand I-405 can best be implemented within the Kirkland section consistent with the long-range I-405 corridor Master Plan and ROD. It is outside the focus and scope of this process to develop and evaluate new alternatives as was accomplished previously during the I-405 Corridor Program EIS.

WSDOT and FHWA will identify expected right-of-way needs for the project and will evaluate the effects on land use patterns and economic activity near the I-405 facility in the Kirkland Nickel Project environmental document. WSDOT and FHWA do not expect the effects on the values of individual properties to be great enough to require detailed evaluation in the environmental document.

Response to Comment 6-5

The need for roadway improvements state-wide is great. The Legislature, in authorizing the funding for the Nickel Projects, did the best it could to fund some of the "worst first" projects. The Legislature knew that this was not a fix-all solution, but it was a start.

It is clear a much greater funding package is needed, not only along I-405, but along many of our highways. The work that the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID) has been doing to bring a comprehensive list of projects to the voters in this area is in recognition of the great need and a farther-reaching comprehensive solution.

In addition, the I-405 corridor has completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and received a Record of Decision (ROD). This document, which took a comprehensive look at the corridor, determined a solution which has been approved. As funding becomes available through means such as the RTID, we can implement the plan in place set through the corridor EIS and ROD.

In summary, the Kirkland Nickel Project is only the first step in a much greater plan for the I-405 corridor as a larger funding package is pulled together.

Response to Comment 6-6

Please see the response to Comments 6-4 and 6-5.

3.1.7 Commenter 7: Elaine Cummins

Response to Comment 7-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 7-2

Please see the response to Comment 6-3. Additionally, we are currently studying wildlife corridors and wildlife movement that could occur within the limits of the Kirkland Nickel Project.

Response to Comment 7-3

We expect that the Kirkland Nickel Project will be built within existing WSDOT right-of-way with the exception of several narrow strips of property along NE 116th Street. No designated open spaces will be taken for the project. No changes in street patterns would be made that would affect community cohesion.

Response to Comment 7-4

Please see the response to Comments 3-2 and 7-3.

Response to Comment 7-5

The January 27, 2004, Design Refinements Environmental Scoping Meeting was an opportunity for the public to provide input into the issues that will be studied in the environmental documents for the Kirkland Nickel Project. Each comment has been read and summarized, and will be answered in the project scoping document. The public comments are being thoughtfully considered, and wherever possible will be incorporated into the project study and design effort. In addition, the I-405 Project Team has coordinated with the City of Kirkland to form the Kirkland Advisory Committee to give further guidance on the Kirkland area projects along I-405. This committee meets monthly, and is comprised of Kirkland neighborhood residents, business owners, City staff, and City Council members. To participate in Kirkland Advisory Committee meetings or to receive regular project information bulletins, please contact Colleen Gants, public information, at colleen.gants@i405.wsdot.wa.gov.

3.1.8 Commenter 8: Paul DeVries

Response to Comment 8-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 8-2

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 8-3

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

3.1.9 Commenter 9: John Doody

Response to Comment 9-1

For noise impact analysis, please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Presently, the I-405 corridor drainage flows directly off the roadway with very little control. This proposed project will be installing systems to collect highway runoff, treat it, and return it back to the waterways and groundwater in a more natural manner. Improvements to the conveyance and discharge facilities are expected to reduce flooding of adjacent properties except during major rainfall events.

3.1.10 Commenter 10: Annemieke Hageman

Response to Comment 10-1

Please see the response to Comment 6-4. I-405 project engineering and environmental staff will identify ways to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for adverse environmental effects associated with I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project. We will also address effects associated with adding the additional lanes on I-405 from SR 520 to SR 522. We will

document this information in reports on geology and soils, air quality, water quality, floodplains, groundwater, fish habitat and aquatic resources, wildlife and vegetation; and wetlands.

Response to Comment 10-2

The I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project team is working closely with the City of Kirkland and a local advisory committee, which was formed by the City Council, to maintain quality of life in local neighborhoods. The Kirkland Advisory Committee will be addressing aesthetics, community connectivity, community sensitive design solutions, among other community issues.

We will address the positive and adverse "quality of life" issues associated with the I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project. We will document this information in the noise, land use, public lands, parks and recreation, social, economic, environmental justice, visual quality, and public services reports, among others.

Response to Comment 10-3

One of the purposes of the I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project is to support a vigorous *state and regional* economy by responding to existing and future travel needs. Population, employment, and freight mobility influence the regional economy. Transportation is relevant because people need to get to work, exchange goods and services, and products carried by freight need to reach customers.

As addressed in the I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement, the Puget Sound region has experienced steady population and employment growth over the past four decades. Employment in the I-405 study area has more than tripled, while population has almost doubled. Population and employment will continue to grow. Between 1970 and 2000, the average daily traffic on several sections of I-405 increased nearly five-fold. The increase in traffic and decreasing reliability of the transportation system has created a problem for regional freight mobility. Forecasts show that by 2020, an additional 144,000 people are expected to be employed within the I-405 corridor. This pattern of growth will increase the demand on the transportation infrastructure needed to support a state and regional economy.

Response to Comment 10-4

The concept that more lanes generate more cars is often referred to as "induced travel." The I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) acknowledged that induced travel occurs in response to improvements in transportation accessibility. However, Section 3.12 of the EIS concluded that there would be limited overall effects of induced demand within the I-405 corridor study area. For more information, the EIS can be viewed on the I-405 project web site at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/I-405/. In addition, the transportation discipline report will further document the transportation performance of the I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project.

You also commented that I-405 improvements would attract drivers from I-5 and expressed a need to widen I-5. We realize that I-5 is a major traffic generator. In addition, more than two-thirds of the total trips on I-405 begin and end within the corridor itself. The remaining trips are generated and distributed to the communities to the south along SR 167 and the developing areas to the east in the Cascade foothills. While improvements to I-5 are outside the scope of the I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project, information on I-5 project improvements is located on the WSDOT projects web site at

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/. Transportation performance of the I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project will be documented in the discipline report.

Furthermore, while I-405 was originally built as a Seattle bypass in the 1960s, it is now the roadway of choice for most north-south trips for the eastside of Lake Washington. Whereas the cities along I-405 were once considered bedroom communities to Seattle, they now house major centers of employment, goods, and services. The I-405 corridor connects the urban centers of Redmond, Bellevue, Tukwila/South Center, Kirkland and others, and regional transportation plans do not consider it to be a mere detour of I-5 to reach the suburbs.

Response to Comment 10-5

Please see response to comment 6-4.

3.1.11 Commenter 11: Leann Hechim

Response to Comment 11-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 11-2

Please see the responses to Comments 6-3 and 7-2. We are currently conducting studies to identify habitat types, including trees, that occur within the Kirkland Nickel Project area and to determine any impacts that could occur on these habitats.

Response to Comment 11-3

Proposed improvements to the storm drainage system along project boundaries will be described in the environmental documentation prepared for the project. The Kirkland Nickel Project will start controlling some of the flows that now discharge into the Sammamish River, by providing treatment as described in the response to Comment 2-4, above. However, most of the discharge from the I-405 corridor that goes to the Sammamish River originates from the interchange with SR 522. Improvements to the SR 522 interchange, including outfalls to the Sammamish River, are included in a later phase of the I-405 Corridor Program.

3.1.12 Commenter 12: Chris Houden

Response to Comment 12-1

Please see the response to Comment 1-1.

3.1.13 Commenter 13: Robert Kamuda

Response to Comment 13-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2. Noise measurements will be taken at locations where there are existing noise walls to evaluate their adequacy with respect to the proposed improvements to I-405.

Response to Comment 13-2

While the amount of delay caused by congestion appears to be very small on a per person basis, the total delay for all I-405 corridor users is substantial. Nearly 800,000 people use I-405 daily, so a delay of five minutes per person (that you calculated) equals almost 67,000 person-hours of congestion per day. WSDOT has estimated that an hour of delay due to congestion costs the region approximately $16.40 per hour for drivers, $12.95 for passengers, and $56.26 for trucks. Even taking the most conservative of the cost figures, the one for passengers and congestion on I-405 costs the region more than $860,000 per day ($12.95 multiplied by 67,000 hours).

WSDOT recently conducted a benefit/cost analysis for the Kirkland Nickel Project. This analysis places a dollar amount on the "cost of time" and compares it to the cost of the project to derive a ratio. The ratio for the Kirkland Nickel Project is 10.8. That is for every dollar spent on the project there will be a benefit factor of 10.8.

3.1.14 Commenter 14: Sue Keller

Response to Comment 14-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

3.1.15 Commenter 15: Donald V. Klein

Response to Comment 15-1

The Kirkland Project will evaluate mitigation measures to break up walls/berms and create a pleasant visual setting. Such mitigation may include enhancing the architectural design of project features such as retaining walls and noise walls, including stepping and battering walls to reduce apparent height, using a consistent design vocabulary throughout the corridor, using lighter weight materials for spans to produce reduced structural silhouettes, applying texture to the concrete surfaces to reduce apparent scale, and applying concrete sealants for uniform color and to limit graffiti damage.

Response to Comment 15-2

Adding lanes to I-405 will shift some traffic from the local street system in Kirkland onto the freeway. The traffic analysis will include other arterial projects planned by the City of Kirkland and other agencies.

3.1.16 Commenter 16: Michelle Lindell

Response to Comment 16-1

For air quality impacts, please see the response to Comment 5-9.

For noise impacts, please see the response to Comment 3-2.

3.1.17 Commenter 17: James R. Loring

Response to Comment 17-1

Response to Comment 17-1

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is conducting project-level evaluations of potential adverse effects on historic and cultural resources as part of its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the Kirkland Nickel Project. This will include addressing the issues identified in the *I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation* (EIS), which provided a corridor-wide, big picture review of potential adverse effects.

Please note that the corridor EIS did address potential impacts that were appropriate for review at the corridor level, and WSDOT proposed the necessary mitigation measures to ensure that anticipated impacts did not rise to a level of significance. As provided for in the *I-405 Corridor Program Record of Decision* (ROD) dated October 2002, the current project-level NEPA review and documentation focuses on site-specific details as well as those issues and concerns that are now ripe for review.

The project-level research and investigations are being conducted in accordance with regulations governing implementation of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800). All sections of the project's area of potential effects (APE) are being investigated for areas with a high potential for archaeological resources using pedestrian surveys and other field investigation techniques. Architectural resources are being investigated within an APE that includes buildings adjacent to the existing transportation facilities. Within this area all buildings more than fifty years of age will be surveyed and evaluated for their potential eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Finally, WSDOT is anxious to respond to all inquiries pertaining to the I-405 corridor improvements. WSDOT and its partners have continued the extensive public involvement process that was initiated with the corridor EIS, carrying it forward into the Kirkland environmental review. We are not aware of any of your inquiries that have gone without a response. If you have questions to which WSDOT has not responded, we invite and request that you resubmit them to Christina Martinez, I-405 Environmental Lead, or Denise Cierei, Segment Manager, so that they may be addressed in a timely manner.

Response to Comment 17-2

WSDOT will comply with the requirements of 36 CFR 800. This is continuing through the NEPA process, studies, and environmental documentation now being conducted for the Kirkland Nickel Project. This environmental process must be completed, and the numerous environmental permits and project approvals must be secured before WSDOT initiates project construction.

All previously recorded archaeological and historic sites have been identified. Research and pedestrian surveys are being conducted to discover any previously unknown sites. In addition, the I-405 Project Team has conducted further, more detailed, ethnographic research to identify Traditional Cultural Places and facilitate Tribal consultation. Potential effects on all sites will be evaluated and adverse effects upon National Register-eligible sites will be mitigated, as required by 36 CFR 800.

Response to Comment 17-3

WSDOT is required by 36 CFR 800 to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects to National Register-listed or eligible cultural resources. Mitigation measures for archaeological and historic resources may include avoidance, monitoring, data recovery, or a combination of these methods. In addition, WSDOT will continue to abide by its commitments and conditions identified in the *I-405 Corridor Program Record of Decision* (ROD) dated October 2002.

Response to Comment 17-4

WSDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are committed to conducting the appropriate environmental review and preparing the necessary documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). At this time, WSDOT and FHWA do not expect that an EIS will be prepared for the Kirkland Nickel Project because it has a low level of controversy and its impacts are not expected to approach a level of significance that would trigger the need for an EIS.

Whatever the level of environmental documentation, the Kirkland Nickel Project will incorporate by reference the *I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation* (EIS) issued in June 2002, and the *I-405 Corridor Program Record of Decision* (ROD) dated October 2002. This will help make clear that issues identified in the EIS are carried forward and addressed appropriately within the Kirkland section at the project level, and it will help ensure that commitments specified in the ROD are incorporated as they apply to the Kirkland Nickel Project.

3.1.18 Commenter 18: Janice and Peter Lyon

Response to Comment 18-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 18-2

For air quality impacts, please see the response to Comment 5-9.

For noise impacts, please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 18-3

The Kirkland Nickel Project, as approved by the Legislature, is very specific in scope and budget. Project funding ($164 million) allows for the addition of one northbound lane from NE 70th Street to NE 124th Street, and one southbound lane from SR 522 to SR 520. The Nickel design is consistent with the Record of Decision portion of the environmental process that was approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation in October 2002.

Response to Comment 18-4

Please refer to the response to Comment 6-4. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration, Sound Transit, and King County Department of Transportation studied and considered implementation of a physically separated, fixed-guideway high-capacity transit system such as light rail or monorail in the BNSF railway right-of-way in the *I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation* issued in June 2002. WSDOT and its partners choose not to include transit use of the BNSF railway right-of-way as part of the Selected Alternative adopted in the *I-405 Corridor Program Record of Decision* dated October 2002, and it is not being

considered as part of the Kirkland Nickel Project. WSDOT and its partners will implement a bus rapid transit system operating in improved high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-405 as part of the Selected Alternative and long-range Master Plan for the I-405 corridor.

3.1.19 Commenter 19: Peter Lyon

Response to Comment 19-1

For air quality impacts, please see the response to Comment 5-9.

For noise impacts, please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 19-2

For air quality impacts, please see the response to Comment 5-9.

For noise impacts, please see the response to Comment 3-2.

The Visual Quality analysis will evaluate potential impacts from light and glare.

Response to Comment 19-3

Please see the response to Comment 18-3.

Response to Comment 19-4

Please refer to the response to Comment 6-4. The design alternatives and mitigation that you suggest appear to be disproportionate and do not bear a reasonable relationship to the low level of impacts on parklands, open space, and recreation facilities that are expected to occur with the Kirkland Nickel Project. As discussed in the response to comment 6-4, it is outside the scope of the Kirkland Nickel Project environmental process to develop and evaluate new alternatives of the magnitude that you suggest because this step in project development was accomplished previously during the I-405 Corridor Program Environmental Impact Statement. Thus, the Washington State Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration do not expect to advance your alternatives for detailed design and evaluation as part of the Kirkland Nickel Project. Local jurisdictions may propose and accomplish community enhancements of this magnitude as partners with WSDOT through the context sensitive design process if they secure the added funding that would be necessary to cover the design and construction costs.

3.1.20 Commenter 20: Randy Mason

Response to Comment 20-1

We do not anticipate impacting existing bicycle routes. As a result, the development of bicycle routes through Bellevue is not part of this project.

3.1.21 Commenter 21: Mike Nienaber

Response to Comment 21-1

The I-405 Congestion Relief and Bus Rapid Transit Projects will provide a number of social and economic benefits to the region by reducing congestion, the number of hours people spend traveling each day, and the cost of operating vehicles as a result of congestion. The end result will be improved quality of life and a more economically competitive region.

Response to Comment 21-2

Please see the response to Comment 2-6.

3.1.22 Commenter 22: Craig Nuttal

Response to Comment 22-1

Please see the response to Comment 2-4. The I-405 Team is committed to using the most environmentally-friendly techniques possible. Drainage design has evolved in recent years to be much more environmentally friendly. The current practice is to use open channels, designed to mimic natural channel cross-sections, wherever possible. The use of cement-walled channels or aqueduct-type structures is not anticipated.

Response to Comment 22-2

The need for new noise walls or higher noise walls will be evaluated. As appropriate, context sensitive design principles will be used to try and make new features such as noise walls compatible with the landscape. Also, please see the response to Comment 5-5 concerning aesthetics.

Response to Comment 22-3

Funding limitations have, and will continue to drive our construction packaging. The competition for transportation construction dollars is tight. The WSDOT I-405 project Team is constantly trying to balance I-405 corridor vision, public acceptance of such a project, and available funds.

Considering that our current funding stream is limited to the Nickel Projects, we have selected construction elements to eliminate/minimize waste in moving forward incrementally with constructing the I-405 corridor vision. From an engineering perspective, this has been achieved by developing the corridor Master Plan first, then packaging construction projects for which funding is available, always keeping the vision in mind and limiting the amount of “throw-away” features.

Response to Comment 22-4

The quantity of right-of-way we are legally allowed to purchase is set by law. We can purchase only what we need for the project we are building. We can not purchase additional right-of-way without the complete environmental clearance for a project. The only exception to this is if we have willing sellers. We cannot, however, condemn properties without the environmental clearance.

That said, within our Nickel Projects, we are trying to plan ahead as much as possible for the Implementation Plan (a future project which is slated to be mainly funded by a Regional Transportation Improvement District – RTID). For example, if a parcel is likely to be affected by the Nickel Project and will be affected again when the Implementation Plan (IP) project comes through several years later, then we will try to purchase all that is needed for both projects. However, as stated previously, the property owner would have to be a willing seller to purchase the IP portion of the parcel.

Response to Comment 22-5

WSDOT is considering design features that limit the amount of fill in the floodplain; however, briding the entire facility is not cost effective. While bridges can provide an environmental benefit at some location, they also concentrate runoff into drainage systems resulting in point discharge, which requires additional treatment.

The use of retaining walls in lieu of roadway prism fill has been considered where feasible and where the walls would not be wasted in moving forward to the corridor vision plan (please see the response to Comment 22-3 for additional information).

The design features (retaining walls, interchanges, bridges, etc.) of the Kirkland Nickel Project were selected to relieve bottlenecks and avoid environmental impacts, yet economize implementation of the corridor vision. Wherever possible, these features must meet the need for the Nickel Project and set the stage for future projects in building toward that vision.

Response to Comment 22-6

The project design will consider landscaping and, where feasible and reasonable, planting at the base of retaining walls, on the highway side of noise walls, and at other locations that adjoin areas of high viewer sensitivity.

Response to Comment 22-7

Comment noted. Analysis of driving skills and driver behavior are beyond the scope of the proposed analysis.

3.1.23 Commenter 23: Diane O'Brien

Response to Comment 23-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 23-2

The environmental document will review the many environmental effects associated with the project. Our staff began data collection shortly after the scoping meeting was held. Noise studies will be included in our analyses. Based on the findings of our studies, we will include any appropriate mitigation for the effects found.

Regarding your general comment of substantial compensation to residents along the corridor for a general drop in property values due to the project, we are not able to

compensate corridor residents for a drop in property values due to the project based on state law.

3.1.24 Commenter 24: Ray Retzlaff

Response to Comment 24-1

As part of the I-405 Kirkland Nickel Project evaluation, WSDOT will determine existing and projected noise levels in the vicinity of the Sunnycreek development (along 113th Avenue NE, south of NE 140th Street). WSDOT will evaluate noise mitigation if we determine the project causes noise levels that approach or exceed abatement criteria. If there is not enough space to increase the height of a noise berm, we would consider constructing a noise wall as an alternative mitigation measure. The height of the noise wall would be designed to provide a substantial noise reduction and to block the line of sight from the first row of houses to truck stacks on the I-405 main line.

3.1.25 Commenter 25: Pam Richmond

Response to Comment 25-1

Please see the response to Comment 2-2. Analysis of current runoff patterns and their effect on existing stream patterns is already occurring. The I-405 Team is actively looking for opportunities to improve the watersheds affected by the roadway.

Response to Comment 25-2

Please see the response to Comment 5-9. The goal of the I-405 Corridor Program is to create a comprehensive strategy to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility, safety and the quality of life for communities in the I-405 corridor. Any decreases in congestion are expected to have a beneficial effect on air quality.

Response to Comment 25-3

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 25-4

Please refer to the response to Comment 6-4. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Sound Transit, and King County Department of Transportation considered a wide range of solutions in the *I-405 Corridor Program Final Environmental Impact Statement and Final Preliminary Section 4(f) Evaluation* (EIS) that focused on reducing automobile travel, implementing a bus rapid transit (BRT) system on I-405, providing new transit facilities such as transit stations and park-and-rides, expanding local bus transit service, developing additional north-south and east-west connections and capacity, and locating a new freeway corridor in east King County as you suggest. WSDOT and its partners will implement all or parts of each of these solutions, excepting the new east King County freeway, as part of the Selected Alternative and long-range Master Plan for the I-405 corridor.

Response to Comment 25-5

Please refer to the responses to Comment 6-4 and to your Comment 25-4.

3.1.26 Commenter 26: Mike Rochlin

Response to Comment 26-1

Issues associated with co-location of human services and housing at the 128th Street transit facility are being addressed by Sound Transit as part of the development of that facility.

Response to Comment 26-2

Please see the response to Comment 2-6.

Response to Comment 26-3

The 128th Direct Access project is a Sound Transit project. It will be required to follow current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards wherever pedestrians have access.

Response to Comment 26-4

The traffic analysis will document effects of the proposed project on HOV lane operations.

Response to Comment 26-5

The I-405 design team has, and continues to seek input from local agencies, Sound Transit, and King County Metro throughout the design process. Charette-style meetings have been held with each city along the corridor to solicit design ideas and to attain the vision of a balanced transportation system, including motorized vehicles, transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. Our design criteria incorporate all state and local standards relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The I-405 design team has begun meeting with the newly formed Kirkland Advisory Committee (KAC), which includes members from the Kirkland City Council, Transportation Commission, City staff, business owners, and citizens. We will continue to actively seek the KAC's input and comments throughout the life of the Nickel Project.

3.1.27 Commenter 27: Mike Rochlin (second submittal)

Response to Comment 27-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 27-2

No changes in public access are expected to take place as a result of this project. Freeway parks and related new residential uses have not been planned as part of this project.

Response to Comment 27-3

Aesthetic issues will be addressed through principles of Context Sensitive Design. As part of this process, Corridor Design Guidelines will be prepared and will provide specific technical direction on all aesthetic issues including structural elements, retaining walls, landscape elements, sign structure elements, lighting applications, and other special elements.

Response to Comment 27-4

The cost of maintenance of noise walls and other items such as road resurfacing will be estimated as part of future project expenses.

Response to Comment 27-5

Please see the response to Comment 2-3.

3.1.28 Commenter 28: Laurel Saromines

Response to Comment 28-1

I-405 is the only major north-south corridor on the east side of Lake Washington, and is among the most congested in the state. The growth rates of the communities along the corridor are among the highest in the state. The Kirkland Nickel Project is the first step toward congestion relief and a fully functional multimodal system.

The Record of Decision, approved in October 2002, identified the I-405 corridor as multimodal. The transit mode is Sound Transit and King County Metro Bus routes. The corridor Implementation Plan will construct several HOV direct-access interchanges in conjunction with current and new park-and-ride lots. These direct-access points provide buses and car pool vehicles with direct access into the HOV lanes, without having to merge through general-purpose traffic lanes.

Other transportation options were considered in the development of the I-405 corridor vision. Among the many reasons that this type of multimodal transit is preferred is that the I-405 corridor already exists as a freight and mobility corridor today. The most efficient use of tax dollars is to improve the system within the current right-of-way.

3.1.29 Commenter 29: Marcia Stedman

Response to Comment 29-1

The comment makes an excellent analogy between traffic and water. The intent of the Kirkland Nickel Project is to remove obstructions that will have the greatest impact in increasing capacity. The Kirkland Nickel Project, which serves as a stage toward the I-405 Corridor Program, has limited funds, and is specifically defined in scope. It focuses on the extreme bottlenecks on the I-405 main line, while adding lane capacity and minimizing waste in moving toward the corridor vision. The Kirkland Nickel Project will not resolve the congestion problem on I-405, but it will increase capacity and move traffic more effectively.

Response to Comment 29-2

Please refer to the response to Comment 6-4. The Selected Alternative adopted by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration, Sound Transit, and King County Department of Transportation includes a bus rapid transit (BRT) system operating in improved high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on I-405 with connections to Issaquah and Redmond, as you suggest. WSDOT and its partners will implement this bus rapid transit system as part of the Selected Alternative and long-range Master Plan for the I-405 corridor. WSDOT and its partners did not include a fixed-guideway high-capacity transit system such as monorail as part of the Selected Alternative; however, high-capacity transit was included in an EIS alternative that was not selected.

Response to Comment 29-3

Please refer to the responses to Comment 6-4 and to your Comment 29-2.

3.1.30 Commenter 30: Keith Stone

Response to Comment 30-1

Please see the response to Comments 2-4 and 11-3. The I-405 Team includes a number of drainage and watershed experts investigating ways to utilize drainage improvements associated with the roadway to improve local drainage conditions and water quality.

3.1.31 Commenter 31: James Tierney

Response to Comment 31-1

Please see the response to Comments 2-4, 11-3, and 30-1.

3.1.32 Commenter 32: Bernard Vanderkamp

Response to Comment 32-1

The Kirkland Nickel Project improvements will not extend into the Yarrow Creek basin. The I-405 team will be doing work along Yarrow Creek during the next phase of the I-405 Kirkland Section, or the Implementation Stage. From the preliminary analysis done for the Kirkland Section Implementation Stage, storm runoff from the freeway and the adjacent interchange with SR 520 will be collected by a new storm drain system. Prior to discharge, the water will be treated by filtration methods to remove sediments and other pollutants, then detained and released at a controlled rate equivalent to a natural condition. The design team will be also looking at the highway crossing of Yarrow Creek, presently in a culvert. The design team will look at the best option for improving this crossing, from both a wildlife and fish habitat standpoint as well as looking at the capacity for flooding concerns.

Response to Comment 32-2

The traffic analysis on the freeway will include impacts on the north end of the SR 520 interchange. We will note any likely impacts through the interchange toward downtown Bellevue, but we will not include a detailed analysis of the full SR 520 interchange.

Response to Comment 32-3

We will continue to work closely with the City of Bellevue as the project develops to assure an appropriate staging plan is formed. Coordination of this project with any other nearby projects will also be a key discussion point during our plan development. We would appreciate any information the City has for major developer or City capital improvement projects that may influence traffic during or after construction of this Nickel Project. Lastly, we will also be interested in working together to develop the appropriate noise permits and mitigation necessary.

3.1.33 Commenter 33: Ken Williamson

Response to Comment 33-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2. Noise measurements are likely to be taken in the vicinity of your residence.

3.1.34 Commenter 34: Unidentified Commenter

Response to Comment 34-1

An analysis of potential environmental justice impacts is being prepared as part of the project environmental documentation.

Response to Comment 34-2

Potential environmental justice impacts are being addressed in the discipline report on that subject. The environmental justice analysis includes a public involvement outreach program to help identify potential impacts to low income and minority populations in the project area.

3.1.35 Commenter 35: Unidentified Commenter

Response to Comment 35-1

Please see responses to Comments 1-1 and 2-4 for how the project design team is studying stream integrity and looking for opportunities to improve local watershed functions. The potential impacts and mitigation for physical changes to stream integrity will be described in the environmental documentation prepared for the project. Discipline reports are being prepared that address traffic safety and environmental justice.

Response to Comment 35-2

A portion of the total project budget includes the cost for mitigation. The I-405 Project Team has incorporated some important mitigation project design features, especially those that improve water quality. For example, some of the existing roadway will be retrofitted to treat and detain stormwater in compliance with current environmental standards. Benefits to water quality and fisheries resources will be substantial. The project has also undertaken an Early Environmental Investments program to work with local jurisdictions in an effort to identify mitigation sites that are consistent with local environmental improvement activities. Other mitigation measures will be developed as impacts are identified in discipline reports.

Response to Comment 35-3

WSDOT remains strongly committed to working with local jurisdictions, resource agencies, and interested parties to identify the mitigation actions that will provide the best environmental outcome for the affected watersheds. In some cases, such as water quality improvements, this is usually most effective when performed as onsite mitigation. Watershed solutions involve improving the overall ecological functioning of the watershed, and are often located outside of the immediate project site. While specific site limitations may make either of these strategies difficult to implement in some locations, WSDOT will continue to look for opportunities to implement both onsite and watershed solutions throughout the corridor.

Response to Comment 35-4

Please see the response to Comment 3-2. As part of the noise impact analysis, different types of noise walls will be considered in locations where noise walls do not exist. Other measures will be evaluated to modify existing noise walls.

Response to Comment 35-5

Please see the response to Comment 28-1. HOT lanes have been analyzed for use on the corridor, but a final decision on their use has not been made. Either way, HOT lanes would have to be constructed on a corridor-wide basis, which is beyond the scope of the Nickel Project.

3.1.36 Commenter 36: Unidentified Commenter

Response to Comment 36-1

Please see the response to Comment 1-1.

Response to Comment 36-2

Please see the responses to Comments 2-2, 2-4, and 9-1.

Response to Comment 36-3

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment 36-4

Please see the responses to Comments 2-2 and 2-4 for a discussion on how we are approaching the design of stormwater management systems on this project.

Response to Comment 36-5

Please see the response to Comment 3-2. As part of the noise impact analysis, different types of noise walls will be considered in locations where noise walls do not exist. Other measures will be evaluated to modify existing noise walls.

Response to Comment 36-6

Please see the responses to Comments 5-4 and 22-4.

3.1.37 Commenter 37: Unidentified Commenter

Response to Comment 37-1

Analysis of public health issues at service stations in Kirkland is beyond the scope of the environmental documentation for this project.

3.1.38 Commenter 38: Unidentified Commenter

Response to Comment 38-1

Potential impacts on wetlands and noise levels are being evaluated in the environmental documentation for the project. Non-motorized transportation is not being evaluated, since the Build Alternative focuses on additional lanes on I-405, an existing limited access interstate highway. We are building sidewalks and a bike lane on NE 116th Street in accordance with the City of Kirkland's Non-motorized Plan.

Response to Comment 38-2

Prior to construction, the contractor would be required to prepare a traffic management plan and have it approved by WSDOT. The contractor may build temporary lanes using shoulders to maintain traffic flow.

Response to Comment 38-3

Please see the response to Comment 5-5. The environmental documentation will carefully consider how views will be affected, including the effect of added pavement. Appropriate mitigation will be offered.

Response to Comment 38-4

Please see the responses to Comments 2-2, 2-4, and 38-2. The Kirkland Nickel Project will include mitigation measures for glare screening. Such mitigation may include shielding roadway light fixtures to minimize glare and ambient light spillover into adjacent residential areas. In addition the project will replace street trees to provide screening for high-quality visual resources and high viewer sensitivity.

Response to Comment 38-5

Our first thought as we plan our construction staging is to find a way to reasonably construct the improvements without impacting commute traffic. If, for some reason, that can not be accomplished, we would look to many different possible methods of construction traffic mitigation. Improving transit will be one of those methods we study.

Regarding your interest in enhanced landscaping and visual aesthetics, we will be working closely with the City and the Kirkland Advisory Committee, which was recently formed by the City Council, to gain input on the aesthetics in this area. We will look at many areas which could be enhanced such as wall texture and landscaping.

We will also work to assure that the improvements on this project blend well with the upcoming improvements in the next phase for the corridor – the Implementation Plan. This next phase does not currently have construction funding, but would mainly be funded through the upcoming Regional Transportation Improvement District (RTID) package which will be put to the voters in the next year or so.

Response to Comment 38-6

Please see the response to Comments 1-1 and 22-3.

Response to Comment 38-7

Please see the response to Comment 5-1. The I-405 design team is working with all local agencies along the corridor, including Sound Transit and King County Metro, to ensure a transportation modal-balanced project.

3.1.39 Commenter 39: Ernie Grillo

Response to Comment 39-1

Please see the response to Comment 5-1. The local roads within a community fall under the jurisdiction of the local city and/or county. Access points to the state highway system are controlled by the state. When grade separated interchanges are designed on the state highway system, input is sought from the local agencies for any local roads that are impacted.

Most cities and counties have adopted some type of transportation plan, which gives each roadway in the local grid a type designation. This includes roadway width, number of lanes, bike lanes and widths, and sidewalks. Generally, the state is obligated to construct the local roadway to meet the criteria of the local governing agency. This would include any over or under crossings to the state highway system.

3.1.40 Commenter 40: Michael Rosenfeld

Response to Comment 40-1

Please see the response to Comment 3-2. Noise measurements are likely to be taken in the vicinity of your residence. Please note that the northbound portion of the project begins at the NE 70th Street interchange.

3.1.41 Commenter 41: Ken Whelan

Response to Comment 41-1

Thanks for your email regarding the Kirkland Nickel Project. I have passed your suggestion to our environmental team, who will incorporate it into the official Nickel Scoping Comments Document for the environmental record. I am also passing the suggestion to designate the "shoulder" between NE 85th and 116th both NB and SB as "exit only." The design team may be able to provide a more immediate design response, I'll check on that.

As far as another meeting where we will be talking about the Kirkland Nickel Project, we will be presenting the program to the Rose Hill Neighborhood Association on Monday, May 17th in the evening (I am not certain of the location just yet). Which Kirkland neighborhood are you affiliated with? It may be that we can schedule a briefing for your neighborhood. We have established a Kirkland Advisory Committee comprised of representatives of Kirkland neighborhoods to advise the project team on design and environmental issues - once I know your neighborhood, I will let you know who your representative is.

Finally, we could schedule a time for you to come to our project office in Bellevue to meet with our engineers and review plan drawings at a mutually agreeable time. Let me know what works for you.

Sincerely,

Colleen Gants . Public Information I-405 Project . 600 108th Avenue NE, Suite 405 . Bellevue, WA . 98004 . 425-456-8555 . fax. 425-456-8600 . colleen.gants@i405.wsdot.wa.gov . www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i-405

Response to Comment 41-2

On reviewing your suggestion, it essentially represents the first stage of the project in Kirkland. In this stage, we would construct a new lane from 85th to 124th, both northbound and southbound. We, too, have identified this location as the spot where we can do the most good quickly.

The biggest difference between your suggestion and our first stage of the project has to do with the shoulder area. In Stage 1, we would be adding the necessary pavement to provide a standard lane. Your option of using the existing shoulder for this new lane would be a quick fix; however, it does pose safety issues that would be unlikely to receive the necessary approvals through federal authorities.

Also, if we were to utilize the shoulder, we would first need to remove the pavement and replace it with a full thickness of paving. Currently, the shoulder is not thick enough to withstand the constant loading of traffic.

In addition, once we use the shoulder area for a lane, the Stage 1 project will be much more difficult to build. This is because construction contractors can use more efficient construction methods when the shoulder area is available to them. In the end, we feel that building the lane as planned in our Stage 1 plans will allow the lane to be opened to

traffic just as quickly and will actually save money, since we will not have to reconstruct the pavement.

We do appreciate your taking the time to comment on the Kirkland Project. Your ideas do have merit; however, our design and construction requirements make them very difficult to implement. If you have any further questions, we would be more than happy to meet with you.

3.1.42 Commenter 42: Leonard F. Newstrum

Response to Comment 42-1

Thank you for providing a copy of the wellhead protection report addressing wells in the vicinity of the project. The report has been forwarded to the project team members preparing the groundwater analysis. Their analysis will address your concern that I-405 is affecting local aquifers.

3.2 Responses to Comments Collected by Project Staff at the Public Scoping Meeting

Response to Comment SM-1

The design team and permitting agencies will establish the mitigation requirements through the environmental assessment and permitting process. These agency-agreed mitigation measures and environmental requirements will become part of the design-builder's contract. Bid prices will reflect efforts to comply with these efforts. The contractor will be inspected and monitored for compliance with the environmental program. Non-compliance could result in work shut down, and/or withheld progress payments until the work is completed. Non-compliance with permit criteria could also subject the contractor to additional fines and penalties.

Response to Comment SM-2

The I-405 drainage design team is actively seeking opportunities to design the "full build" drainage system and, where feasible, to install it during the Nickel Project. Limitations due to project phasing requirements, funding, and land availability mean this will not always be possible.

Response to Comment SM-3

Please see the response to Comment 1-1. A discussion of the Early Environmental Investments program will be included in the environmental documentation for the project.

Response to Comment SM-4

The property located at 3205 115th Ave NE (Bellevue) is south of the Kirkland Nickel Project limits, so the property will not be affected.

Response to Comment SM-5

As part of the noise impact analysis, different types of noise walls will be considered in locations where noise walls do not exist. Other measures will be evaluated to modify existing noise walls.

Response to Comment SM-6

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment SM-7

Please see the response to Comment 1-1

Response to Comment SM-8
There is an area of low lying land, downstream of the freeway in the NW quadrant of the 70th interchange where a number of properties are affected by the flooding. Although the Kirkland Nickel Project will not be doing any improvements to the freeway in this area, the next phase of the I-405 project is scheduled to provide drainage improvements in this area. The future drainage system will collect and detain the pavement runoff that presently runs into this low lying area and should help to improve the downstream flooding situation.

Response to Comment SM-9

There is insufficient space at this location to place your proposed HOV improvements.

The retaining wall shown at the beginning (left edge) of sheet 3–along 11414 NE 145th Street is shown within the right-of-way. The retaining wall and right-of-way lines are shown at an exaggerated scale for visibility on the exhibits. Acquisition of some or all of this property may be considered for drainage detention requirements and to eliminate the need for a retaining wall that would require reconstruction in moving to the Implementation Plan.

Response to Comment SM-10

With respect to noise impacts, please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment SM-11

Please see the response to Comment 3-2. It is expected that noise measurements will be taken in the vicinity of your residence.

Response to Comment SM-12

No impacts to Forbes Lake are expected. Substantial improvements to water quality leaving the roadway are anticipated. Water quality treatment will be provided for all new pavements, and will be retrofitted to existing pavement. Most water quality treatment will occur through the use of linear ecology embankments or ecology ditches paralleling the roadway so that water leaving the right-of-way will have received treatment before it is detained or discharged to local drainage systems.

Response to Comment SM-13
We will compile responses to comments into a scoping report and post it on the I-405 Congestion Relief and Bus Rapid Transit Projects web site at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/I-405/.

Response to Comment SM-14

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment SM-15

The I-405 public information team, led by Colleen Gants, is collaborating with Kari Page at the City of Kirkland. In fact, Ms. Page was consulted as part of our efforts to invite a broad group to the January 27, 2004, scoping meeting. We are also working with Ms. Page on further neighborhood outreach as the project progresses further. To this date, we have spoken to the Bellevue Neighborhood Network North, Houghton Neighborhood Council, Kirkland Chamber of Commerce, Kirkland City Council, and to a group of neighbors in a private Kirkland resident's home.

Response to Comment SM-16
Improvements to I-405 include retrofitting most of the freeway to provide water quality treatment as well as detention. In particular the existing stormwater ponds at NE 85th will be incorporated as part of the new I-405 project stormwater treatment system as much as possible. Although some changes are anticipated, existing ponds will be improved and/or replaced at other nearby locations. This work will be done during the next phase of the I-405 improvement project. No impacts to Forbes Lake are anticipated.

Response to Comment SM-17

Please see the response to Comment 3-2 for noise concerns. Please note that only one southbound lane would be added in this area.

Response to Comment SM-18

Concerning air quality impacts, please see the response to Comment 5-9.

Response to Comment SM-19

Please see the response to Comment 3-2. WSDOT will not unnecessarily cut down trees.

Response to Comment SM-20

There is one location south of the southbound NE 70th Street on-ramp, where the Kirkland Nickel Project proposes the relocation of a portion of a noise wall to accommodate an additional southbound travel lane and on-ramp improvements. The portion of the noise wall is located from the south end of the on-ramp to just south of the pedestrian crossing at NE 60th Street.

The pedestrian crossing will remain in place for the Kirkland Nickel Project, and will act as a constraint to how far back the noise wall can be moved. Survey information has been sought to confirm vertical clearance at the proposed I-405 shoulder. The noise wall will likely only be removed and reconstructed if it could be built at the Implementation Plan location. Either way, all work would be contained within WSDOT right-of-way for the Kirkland Nickel Project.

Response to Comment SM-21

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment SM-22

The traffic analysis will conduct a detailed operational study of the NE 116th Street interchange with I-405 and effects on NE 116th Street approaching I-405. We are using the CorSim micro simulation modeling package to look at all of the NE 116th Street intersections as a system.

Traffic in the vicinity of the I-405/NE 116th Street interchange and the intersection of NE 116th Street and 120th Street NE is being evaluated. Measures to improve the flow of traffic, including new turn lanes and signalization, are being proposed.

Response to Comment SM-23

Please see the response to Comment 3-2.

Response to Comment SM-24

WSDOT wants to make sure that this project is as environmentally safe as possible and believes that environmental studies are needed to support project design activities. Additionally, regulatory permitting and approval processes, such as the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act, require these studies.

Response to Comment SM-25

Please refer to the responses to Comments 6-4 and 29-2.

Response to Comment SM-26

Please see response to Comment 2-4 for a general description on how stormwater will be handled and treated. Stormwater from new pavement area to be constructed by the Kirkland Nickel Project will be collected and treated prior to its release back to the environment. The next phase of the I-405 project will be expanding this new system, to fully retrofit the existing area such that the whole freeway runoff is collected and receives both water quality treatment and detention.